

Arts/Entertainment

Enhance the holiday spirit with a gift of music

A festive season without music is like a tree without decorations, a menorah without candles. Something is missing. If you're looking to catch the full spirit this holiday season, check out some of the new musical releases now available in record stores and kids' specialty shops. The best among them include the latest from Ottawa's own Suzanne Pinel (television's Marie-Soleil), and Outaouais-based Carmen Campagne.

Pinel's Christmas album (the first one she's had produced by Jon Park-Wheeler — Fergus on *Marie-Soleil*) is an occasion of joy, seasonal spirit and good music. *Fêtons Noël!* offers traditional and original songs on three themes — spiritual, family-oriented and festive.

There are old favorites, long popular in French Canada, like the lovely carol *D'où viens-tu, berger?* and the children's song *Petit Papa Noël*. There are original Pinel compositions like *Merci*, an inspiring little non-denominational prayer. There's *Rouyon*, sweet homage to a teddy bear written by Bernard Poulin, the artist whose *trompe l'oeil* mural provides a little magic inside the main entrance to CHEO. There's even a touch of rock 'n' roll — Pinel's own *Fais le clown* — which has become the runaway hit at her concerts these days.

A must for Pinel's many young *Marie-Soleil* fans, *Fêtons Noël!* is also perfect for introducing tiny English-speakers to seasonal joy in a different cultural and linguistic setting.

At a completely different pace, though no less appealing, is Carmen Campagne's new release from Oak Street Music, *Rêves multicolores*. The Saskatchewan-born singer, a former French immer-



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sion teacher, won a 1989 Juno for the French-English collection of lullabies she recorded with Connie Kaldor. With *Rêves multicolores*, she's back on the same soothing track.

Campagne's lovely, lilting voice is the perfect vehicle for the gentle bedtime numbers that form the heart of this new collection. Mostly traditional, the songs come from wonderfully different sources. There are French Canadian numbers, a delightful Creole piece, a sweet little Spanish song of love, a hauntingly beautiful Israeli lullaby. And there is, finally, the title song, a richly lyrical number by Paul Campagne — Carmen's brother and a member of the family troupe, Hart Rouge, who sing backup for their sister.

Here's the bonus: aimed at the very young, the songs are nevertheless so irresistible that most parents will find themselves every bit as enchanted as their dreamland-bound youngsters. What more could you ask for in a kids' recording?

Other new releases available on local store shelves these days?

- From Ottawa-born Nadia (she goes by her



Pinel

Two singers offer new albums filled with holiday joy

first name only now), there's album No. 2. Called simply *Nadia*, it features the singer's strong, sure voice in folk stylings of 10 songs written by her and three by others. Among the best of them: *Canada My Very Own*, *I Can Be Anything* and *Glad To Be Me* — songs that wax both eloquent and enthusiastic about issues like multiculturalism and self-esteem.

- Winnipeg's Rocki Rolletti (a.k.a. Peter Jordan, CBC-Radio personality) brings slightly twisted rock 'n' roll to the kids' arena with *Do the Rolletti* (Oak



Campagne

Street Music). With backup band Junior Noodle Wave, he gets kids and parents alike moving vigorously to familiar-sounding songs like *Woolly Jammies*, *Big Bad Ron* and a pint-sized version of *Shakin' All Over*.

- The third album from Torontonian Jack Grunsky, *Waves of Wonder* (BMG Kidz), is infused with an international flavor. There's also a steady supply of the feel-good music that happens when a pleasing voice meets up with talented instrumentation and top production values.

- From the U.S. (where kids' releases tend to have commercial glitz sprinkled liberally over them), a pair of movie soundtracks might be just the ticket for young moviegoers who enjoyed the big-screen originals.

From Walt Disney Records, the music from Disney's *Aladdin* is available in cassette and CD formats. So are the songs and score from *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, a soundtrack album from BMG Kidz.

- Finally, a word of warning. Also from Hollywood and BMG Kidz comes *Brother for Sale* — song performances by Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, the six-year-old twins who play Michelle on television's *Full House*.

This album is so self-consciously cute — so filled with a saccharine-sitcom view of childhood — it's painful. Makes your fillings ache.

But that hardly matters, given all the other really worthwhile options available.

The gift of music can be a splash of sunshine on a grey winter canvas. This holiday season, enjoy its warmth and joy.

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